

State of the Web

NC Department of Health and Human Services
January 2007

The purpose of the NC Department of Health and Human Services website is to help North Carolina individuals and families access services to enhance their quality of life. Once our website is redesigned, opportunities for healthier and safer lives will be presented in ways that are more useful, concise, reliable, and easily accessible. Local agencies, state employees and the businesses and nonprofits we partner with will have a one-stop shop for useful information.

Completed in 2006

DHHS currently has 119 separate public websites with unique home pages, unique design, and unique navigation.

For each service in the DHHS redesigned site, visitors will be able to get basic information on:

- *What is the service*
- *Who is eligible*
- *How to apply*
- *Contacts*
- *Your rights*
- *This program in Spanish*

- **.GOV Address:** NCDHHS.GOV easier to remember and easier to create short URLs to our programs and services. The first program to use the new URL is asthma.ncdhhs.gov.
- **First Comprehensive Inventory** of DHHS sites achieved.
- **Information Design for Residents is 90 Percent Complete:** Content teams from across our department have organized information. A comprehensive list of services, hotlines, hot topics—all information that NC residents need—has been compiled. Furthermore, the teams devised a common-sense approach to how all services to NC residents should be presented.
- **Best Practices for Forms.** The Government Content Team provided the department with recommendations for how to standardize quality assurance, accessibility, and interactivity of forms.
- **Design and Usability, Round One:** A preliminary design has been created for the website, and a round of usability tests completed. Lessons learned from the tests will drive improvements to the design.
- **Functional Requirements** for a Web Content Management System were defined. DHHS will enter the 21st century when it procures a web content management system. This powerful system will revolutionize the way we do the web, making the management of information easier, making our websites more consistent and user friendly, and enhancing accountability to division and departmental management. The functional requirements say exactly what this system needs to do for DHHS.



Next Steps: Redesign Website

- **Design and Usability, Round Two:** A fresh and clean design will be completed that will be much more usable for our audiences.
- **Information Design, Part Two:** What do our audiences in local government, state employees, partners and providers, and researchers need to see, and how should it be presented?
- **Web Content Management System Procurement:** Once SB991 approval is obtained, we'll put out a request for proposal for a Web Content Management System. Division personnel will help ensure that a system is chosen that will work for the entire department.
- **Pilot:** The upper level pages and some DMA pages will be piloted. The information design and the usability of the new website will be assessed, and lessons learned will drive the last round of improvements before the design is finalized.
- **Spanish Pilot:** Web pages for the first dozen services that a Hispanic audience needs will be written, checked for cultural relevancy, translated, and piloted in a separate website: www.espanol.ncdhhs.gov.
- **Style Guide:** Consistency across the website will help our site visitors learn how to use the site. Use of plain language will help us communicate to all of our audiences. A style manual will help us accomplish these goals. Writer training will be offered.
- **Division Incorporation:** Divisions will receive writer training and training in the content management system before they are incorporated into the redesign site.

Next Steps: Incremental Improvements on Current Sites

- **Implement Search Engine.** A search engine for the department is now available and will be incorporated across the department. It crawls every known website in the department. Search capability will make our programs and services much more transparent to the public. It will also highlight flaws and out-of-date information, so quality control efforts will be a heightened focus.
- **Web Governance:** Each division has its own quality control processes for their websites. As we move to an integrated website, there is a need to standardize practices. New web policies are being written. Division Web Content Managers will be appointed to ensure the quality and timeliness of their website(s). This person, on behalf of the director, will serve as the liaison with the redesign project director.
- **Accessibility:** We'll promote awareness, best practices, and training regarding accessibility of all PDF documents placed on the web.
- **Certification:** We'll work with the division web content managers to create a process to "certify" all departmental websites to ensure that the information on our websites is current and appropriate.

The project sponsor is Linda Povlich. The project director is Lois Nilsen, Office of Public Affairs. For updates on the website redesign project, go to: ncdhhs.gov/redesignproject